

**HAMPTON CREEK COVE  
CLASS I SCENIC-RECREATIONAL STATE NATURAL AREA**

<b>COUNTY:</b>	Carter	<b>ACREAGE:</b>	693
<b>7.5° QUADRANGLE:</b>	White Rocks Mountain	<b>OWNERSHIP:</b>	State of Tennessee
<b>PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCE:</b>	Cumberland Plateau	<b>YEAR DESIGNATED:</b>	1986

**DESCRIPTION:**

Hampton Creek Cove is a 693-acre natural area located in Carter County outside of the town of Roan Mountain near Roan Mountain State Park. Hampton Creek Cove is in the Southern Appalachian Mountains between an elevation of 3,000 to 4,800 feet. The upper boundary is contiguous to the Cherokee National Forest where the Appalachian Trail (AT) crosses on Little Hump and Hump Mountain. The Cherokee is where the upper reaches of the Left Prong of Hampton Creek originate. The creek is a prominent feature bisecting the length of the natural area draining young and mature forests, seeps, and farmland in the cove. While considered one of the most productive trout streams in east Tennessee, it is presently undergoing brook trout restoration directed by Trout Unlimited and the Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency. Seeps, which were once the source of drinking water here, are fairly common and often found on slopes. One such seep forms a small scrub and shrub bog near a low elevation pasture that supports a diversity of wetland species.

Hampton Creek Cove is managed by the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy (SAHC) landtrust. SAHC is dedicated to the preservation of the ecological and cultural heritage of the Southern Appalachian Region. It employs a caretaker, born and raised at Hampton Creek Cove, who grazes cattle and horses on approximately 100 acres of pastureland. Fencing along the creek and other riparian restoration activities has been implemented to demonstrate the compatibility of natural area preservation and agricultural practices. Past land use is apparent at places like the old Lenoir Schell homesite ruins, where you can see vestiges of a mature grove of butternut trees and remnants of stonewalls built in the late 1800's and early 1900's.

The old field/forest succession at the lower mountain elevation provides excellent nesting habitat for the golden winged warbler, a neotropical migrant species in decline. The trail follows the creek through pasture and forest making this a very popular birding location. A plan to connect the trail with the AT to access Little Hump and Hump Mountain from the natural area is under consideration. Presently, the trail traverses a northern hardwood forest community on mid and upper slopes where yellow birch, striped maple, northern red oak, and tulip popular are dominant species. No matter your vantage point from the trail, you are sure to enjoy the vista of one Southern Appalachian pastoral and mountain beauty without equal at Hampton Creek Cove. No matter your vantage point from the trail at Hampton Creek Cove, you are sure to enjoy the vista, which is one of Southern Appalachian pastoral and mountain beauty without equal.

**SITE MANAGEMENT:**

Southern Appalachians Highland Conservancy, 804 Rock City Road, Kingsport, Tennessee 37664, (423) 323-4993. Division of Natural Heritage, 401 Church Street, 14th Floor L&C Tower, Nashville, TN 37243-0447, (615) 532-0431.

**PUBLIC ACCESS:**

Public access is allowed: parking and hiking trails are provided.

**DIRECTIONS:**

From Elizabethton, Tennessee, take U.S. Highway 321/19E through Hampton and then continue on 19E to the Town of Roan Mountain. From the Town of Roan Mountain, take State Route 143 south, turning left on Stratton Street. Turn right at the first stop sign then bear left on West Street. Take the first right on Old Highway 143, then turn left on the bridge that crosses the creek (across from the old school building), and follow it to Hampton Creek Cove. The parking area is on the left just past Gray's Chapel approximately three miles from the Town of Roan Mountain.